11: Scheffer O-4,5 (ca. 1660) 1704
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the Ignorance and Careleſneſs of the Country Clergy; but ſince by the Care of the *Swediſh* Kings, a Yearly Synod has been Convocated at *Rival*, for the regulation of Church-Affairs, and Examination of the Clergy-Men; it has been found by experience, that beſides their unfitneſs for Devotion, by reaſon of the conſtant Fatigues they are forced to undergo, their antient Idolatry and Superſtition, has taken ſo deep root among them, as not to be quite extirpated by the Art of Man; for ſuch is their Inclination for Sorcery, that they are of Opinion their Cattel cannot thrive without it; for which reaſon, Fathers and Mothers among theſe Peaſants, are as careful to inſtruct their Children in it, as we do in the Cathechiſm and other good Morals. To elude the Effects of Charms, they never kill a Beaſt, or make a Slaughter, but they throw ſome part away, upon which the effect of the Charm is to fall; nay, they are ſo far entangled in Superſtition, that if within a few Weeks after Baptiſm, the Child happen to fall ill, or pine away, they Rebaptize it, alledging, that the firſt Name was not agreable to its Conſtitution, tho' very ſevere Laws have been enacted againſt it. The worſt of all is, that they are ſo Tenacious of theſe Superſtitions, and ſo obſtinate in the perſeverance of their antient Cuſtoms, that nothing is able to divert them from it. Of this there have been ſeveral Inſtances of late Years; for theſe Peaſants, as I told you before, being not permitted to purchaſe any Lands, but obliged to live upon the Allotments granted to them by their Lords, for the bare ſuſtenance of their Families, will ſometimes cut or burn down ſome Woods, and Manure the Ground, which produces good Wheat; this they hide for Sale; but if they happen to be catch'd, they are ſtrip'd to the middle, and ty'd to a Poſt, where they are ſoundly whipt with a Switch, till the Blood iſſues forth on all Sides; I ſay, there are many Inſtances of ſuch among the *Livonian* Peaſants, who rather than redeem this Chaſtiſement by a ſmall pecuniary Mulct of about 18 or 16 Pence, have choſen to ſubmit readily to the Puniſhment, alledging, that rather than introduce any Novelty of this Kind, they would ſuffer the ſame Chaſtiſement their Fore-fathers uſed to do before them.

CHAP.